42.242 in June 1998. The month-wise percentage changes in the value of rupee against the US dollar during the last six months are as under:—

Month		Appre./depre. (−) of rupee against the US $ over previous month (Per cent)
January	1998	− 0.42
February	1998	1.28
March	1998	− 1.55
April	1998	− 0.39
May	1998	− 2.01
June	1998	− 4.19

(c) The exchange rate of the rupee is market determined. The developments in the East Asian markets since June 1997 have had their impact on market sentiments in India also and expectations contributed to the pressure on the rupee. Besides, several unanticipated developments during May and June 1998 also contributed to the pressure on the rupee.

(d) The Reserve Bank of India had taken several measures to contain volatility in the value of the rupee and to ensure orderly conditions in the foreign exchange market. These measures include: purchase/sale of foreign exchange by the RBI in the foreign exchange market, which are often supplemented by deployment of suitable monetory measures. Specific measures are also instituted to reduce the access to nomestic liquidity for speculative purposes.

Guidelines for externally aided projects

3760. DR. MAHESH CHANDRA SHARMA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that as per Government guidelines the Central Government provides 25% amount of the budgetary resource for Externally Aided Projects as an advance in the beginning of the financial year to be adjusted against the expenditure for implementing the Externally Aided Projects without causing time and cost over run; and

(b) if so, whether the Central Government has released the amount of advance to the State of Rajasthan?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The normal procedure for release of Additional Central Assistance (ACA) is on reimbursement basis. However, release of advance ACA has been undertaken by way of assisting the States in effective aid utilisation. The amount of advance ACA has varied from year to year. During 1998-99, an amount of Rs. 30.42 crore has been released as advance ACA to the State of Rajasthan.

Reducing subsidies on non-merit goods

3761. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Finance has made a recommendations to reduce subsidies on non-merit goods; and

(b) if so, whether Government have accepted these recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Ministry of Finance has not made any recommendations to reduce subsidies on non-merit goods. However, to initiate public debate on subsidies, Ministry of Finance circulated in both Houses of